

Excerpts from Kidd, Colin. 'Integration: Patriotism and Nationalism'. *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Ed. H. T. Dickinson. Cornwall: Blackwell, 2002. 369-380.

"The vital missing ingredient from Colley's work is the phenomenon of anglicization, whether in the fields of culture, economics or politics. The *Spectator* of Addison and Steele was widely imitated throughout the provincial capitals of the British world. North Britain saw a craze for elocution and a mania for the eradication of unseemly scotticisms in speech and prose. The emergence of a consumer society encouraged provincials to ape the fashions and accoutrements of the sophisticated metropolitan lifestyle. It would be a mistake to underestimate the appeal of English liberties to the wider British world. Britain did not only unite against an external Other, but the emulation of Englishness acted – up to a point – as a glue of integration. Throughout the eighteenth-century British world there was a strong identification with the values and institutions of the English motherland. Colonial Americans and Protestant Irishmen believed themselves to be of English stock, and heirs to the precious English liberties of their Anglo-Saxon ancestors. North Britons, though clearly not of English stock, quickly lost their former patriotic shibboleths, coming to the conclusion that the Union of 1707 had entitled them to full incorporation within a more advanced and liberal England. After all, British provincials, such as Scots, Protestant Irishmen and Americans perceived the liberal essentials beneath the outer ethnic cladding of Englishness: civil, political and religious liberty, trial by jury, government by parliaments and the need for the collective assent of the people's representatives to taxation. English liberties embodied universal aspirations to freedom and self-government. To be under the protection of England, either as a North Briton fortuitously admitted in 1707, or an Englishman in a colonial setting, it seemed, was to enjoy the natural rights of mankind.

In Scotland, for example, a controversy begun during the 1690s over Scotland's economic failures eventually ushered in a wide-ranging critique of Scottish institutions, a process of self-examination which was to be one of the characteristic features of the Scottish enlightenment. A philosophy of progress emerged during the Scottish enlightenment, associated not only with celebrated figures such as Lord Kames, Adam Smith and John Millar, but also with the likes of Sir John Dalrymple, who contrasted the legal histories of England and Scotland in his *Essay towards a General History of Feudal Property in Great Britain* (1757). The history of mankind was a story of progress from the primitive hunter-gatherer state through pastoral and agrarian stages to the refinement of modern commercial society. As a result, the propriety and utility of institutions and laws came to be assessed against a yardstick of commercial modernity, set by Scotland's liberal post-feudal southern neighbour. The movement for agricultural improvement which gathered steam from the establishment of the Honourable Society of Improvers in 1723 was directed not only towards encouraging the introduction of new techniques, but also towards the removal of political, legal and social obstacles that hindered the emergence of a more dynamic and commercialized agrarian economy. Within the discourse of the improvers, the goals of prosperity and modernization were closely linked to anglicization and the attainment of English-style civil liberties. Criticism of Scotland's economic mismanagement and illiberal, stagnant feudal law rapidly displaced sentimental nostalgia for the old Scots parliament lost in 1707. Indeed, commentators identified this unicameral magnate-dominated body as an obstacle to the development of pre-union Scotland. While Scots had thankfully been liberated from their oligarchic parliament, other problems remained to be tackled. During the first half of the century some Scots even campaigned to 'complete the union' – to extend to Scots, conscious of their comparative subordination to the still extensive powers and jurisdictions of a feudal baronage guaranteed by Articles XVIII and XX of the Union, the freedoms enjoyed by the English nation. This goal was realized in good part by the legal reforms that followed the Jacobite rebellion of 1745–6: the abolition of strict feudal vassalage and most heritable jurisdictions (private feudal courts held by Scots barons which appeared to taint the justice administered to their subjects). Thereafter, many Scots jurists

and historians celebrated this legislation of 1747–8 as the eventual admission of formerly oppressed North Britons to their proper entitlement of English liberties. In succeeding decades, however, Scots anglicizers perceived other defects in Scots law that needed to be rectified, including a law of entails which hindered investment in agriculture and the lack of a civil jury in Scotland. During the 1760s several writers issued calls for the curtailment of Scots entails, achieving a partial success in the Montgomery Act of 1770, while in 1785 a campaign began for the introduction to Scotland of the civil juries enjoyed by Englishmen. Scots also remained aware that the electoral franchise north of the border was much narrower than in England, a defect of the union that would be addressed in 1832. The value attached to Englishness was strikingly demonstrated during the 1790s when Scots radicals agitated not for a Scottish Jacobin nationalism, but for the restoration of ancient Anglo-Saxon liberties. This anglophilic fantasy was but the culmination of eighteenth-century Scots' progressive loss of confidence in their own historical nationhood. In 1729 the Jacobite antiquary Father Thomas Innes had exploded the myth of Scotland's national origins, which had endured since the fourteenth century. Enlightenment historians went further, not only criticizing the backwardness of Scotland's institutional and economic progress relative to England's, but, in the case of Hume's *History of England* and John Millar's *Historical View of English Government*, reducing the history of Scotland to a mere aspect of the decisive and all-important history of England. Although enlightened Scots challenged some of the more vulgar errors of England's Whig mythology, such correctives did little to inhibit either the Scottish critique of Scottishness or a well-entrenched North British anglophilia.

The experiences of colonial America and Protestant Ireland, however, indicate that a narrow line separated this enthusiastic emulation of the liberal English core from a colonial irritation with the exclusiveness of the English motherland. Historians are agreed that colonial Americans described themselves as Englishmen and Britons. Indeed, John Murrin has shown that anglicization was the dominant trend in colonial society until the 1760s. Among the contingencies of that decade which suddenly eroded this strong identification with England were not only new fiscal strategies, but also the changed political environment at the seat of imperial government associated with the rise of the Scots politician Lord Bute, the favourite of the new monarch George III. Despite Bute's rapid downfall in 1763, his influence seemed to persist in court and government circles, a rhetorical ploy of his opponents which found a purchase far from home in the colonies. Scotophobia – whether directed against Bute, the grasping factors of Glasgow tobacco houses who controlled the credit lines of an indebted planter class, zealous imperial officials and, eventually, Scots loyalists – was to be a prominent characteristic of revolutionary American political culture. The perception that London was in the grip of an authoritarian quasi-Jacobite Scottish 'mafia' determined to undermine English liberties helped to ease the transition from colonial anglophilia to more assertive demands for colonial autonomy. Nevertheless, the colonial cult of Anglo-Saxon liberties that had helped to foster colonial radicalism and a revolutionary outlook survived the break with England. Thomas Jefferson, who penned the Saxonist pamphlet *Vindication of the Rights of British America* in 1774, remained obsessed with Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence, philology and religious institutions long after the winning of independence.

Eighteenth-century Ireland followed a pattern of anglicization midway between the Scottish and American experiences. During the first half of the century a defiant Protestant Irish patriotism which asserted the status and privileges of the Irish parliament was counterbalanced by an equally proud acknowledgement of English ancestry and values and a willingness to contemplate union with the motherland. Indeed, both sets of values were as likely as not to be articulated by the same politicians and pamphleteers. Swift contended that Englishmen in Ireland wanted only to be treated as such by their compatriots in England. At the turn of the century, Protestant Irishmen were provoked by English interference in, and restrictions upon, Irish trade. Although Ireland was formally excluded from the Navigation Acts until the winning of concessions in 1779, Ireland did participate in the Atlantic

economy throughout the eighteenth century – as historians now recognize – exporting linen and salted beef to England and the West Indies.

Economic complaints were compounded by constitutional fears, as in the heightened patriotism of the 1720s. first, the legal case of ‘Sherlock versus Annesley’ provoked the Westminster parliament’s Declaratory Act of 1720, which decreed that the British, not the Irish, House of Lords should be Ireland’s ultimate court of appeal, and also made clear the right of the superior British parliament to pass legislation applicable to Ireland. Furthermore, the grant of a patent to mint copper coin for Ireland to William Wood, a Wolverhampton manufacturer, was attacked during the Wood’s Halfpence controversy (1722–5) for its economic consequences, and by some, including Swift in the *Drapier’s Letters*, as an example of how Ireland’s political subordination to England led to poor governance. Swift’s patriotism was also symptomatic of discontent within the Church of Ireland where there was resentment among native-born Protestants at the appointment of English-born bishops to Irish sees.

Nevertheless, Irish patriots remained conscious of their identity as the English nation in Ireland. During the 1750s the Dublin radical Charles Lucas still spoke the language of Anglo-Saxon constitutionalism. The climate was changing, however. In 1759 rumours of an impending union provoked a riot in Dublin. Moreover, from 1767 the government abandoned the system of managing the Irish parliament through the agency of native-born magnates, or ‘undertakers’. Henceforth there was an escalation of Irish political grievances which culminated during the crisis of the American War of Independence when a weak British government was driven to concede greater autonomy to the Irish parliament. The Irish constitutional revolution of 1782 included the repeal of the Declaratory Act and the modification of Poynings’ Law. Although a new edition of Molyneux’s *Case of Ireland* was published in 1782 which, significantly, dropped the balanced pro-unionist sentiment of the original, there was still – as in Revolutionary America – an anglophilic dimension to the campaign for independence from the mother country. The Irish patriot leader Henry Grattan still spoke the language of English constitutionalism.

Parliamentary autonomy was short-lived. The French Revolutionary Wars created new fears about the security of the British Isles, paralleling the anxieties which had brought about the Union of 1707. Moreover, the danger posed to the English connection by the establishment of the radical non-sectarian Society of United Irishmen in 1791 – designed to unite Catholics, Presbyterians and establishment Protestants to liberate Ireland from English interference – was exacerbated from another direction by the renewal of sectarian violence, not least from Catholic Defenderism. Over the course of the decade, the initial dream of the United Irishmen collapsed, the organization was driven underground and into insurrectionist conspiracy with Revolutionary France. The traumatic Irish rebellion of 1798 – confirming twin fears of Jacobinism and political Catholicism – led mainland politicians to work for union as a political and strategic necessity. The Union of 1800 that united the British parliament with a reluctant – but pliable and anxious – Irish parliament was, like the Union of 1707, a contingency which ran against the patriotic grain of recent history. While the prime motive behind union in 1800 was strategic, the rhetorical justifications of union – most famously advanced by Dundas, the Scots-imperial politician – revolved around the opportunities of commerce and empire and the chance to emulate Scotland’s successful integration with the English core.”